Iraq
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SUBJECT: Iraq

May 18, 1953

PLACE: Office of Prime Minister

PARTICIPANTS:

United States	Iraq
Honorable John Foster DULLES, Secretary of State	Jamil al MADFAI, Prime Minister
Honorable Harold E. STASSEN, Mutual Security Administrator	Ali Jawdat al-AYUBI, Deputy Prime Minister
Honorable Douglas MacARTHUR II, State Department Counselor	Tawfiq al-SUWAIDI, Foreign Minister
Honorable Henry A. BYROADE, Assistant Secretary of State	Nuri SAID, Minister of Defense
The Ambassador	Musa SHAHBANDER, Ambassador-designate to the United States
Mr. Philip IRELAND	Yusuf GAILANI, Under Secretary, Foreign Affairs

The Prime Minister:

1. In his statement of welcome to the Secretary, Prime Minister said he was happy to see the Secretary visiting this area in these troubled times. He said he was particularly pleased to see him in Iraq which, being closer to the danger, was therefore appreciative of the difficulties of its position.

2. Palestine was the greatest obstacle to improvement of relations between US and Iraq. A settlement should be made in the interest of equity and justice, and to restore confidence in the US. Not until it was settled could the Iraq Government have a basis for creating public opinion in favor of mutual defense arrangements. Iraqis were far from satisfied with UN treatment of Palestine, but if an initial step were necessary, the Iraqi Government could discuss peace only on the basis of

the UN

the UN resolutions. In urging necessity of a just solution, the Prime Minister declared that, in the absence of such solution, Israel would find ways to expand at the expense of the Arabs in this area.

3. The Arab world was disturbed, not only by the situation in Palestine, but also by that of North Africa which, unless a settlement were attained, would make it impossible for the Arabs to come to the aid of their Allies and friends.

Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, Foreign Minister:

1. The Foreign Minister declared that Iraqis were lovers of peace, interested only in peaceful pursuits and in developing their country. The Iraq Government was fostering the policy of development since it would remove the basis for extremists' agitation among the people.

2. The most necessary requirement of Iraq's foreign policy was the restoration of confidence of Iraq toward the western world. After reviewing the reasons for the lack of such confidence - the rise of colonialism after World War I and the question of Palestine - he stated that if the question of cooperation between the Arabs and the West were raised, the Arab answer to such request was now that, on the basis of experience, the West had forfeited the right of being believed. The unjust settlement of Palestine and the creation of hundreds of thousands of homeless Arab refugees had further stimulated public opinion against the West. Arab political leaders were now unable to win public opinion to the support of the West. The Foreign Minister said he personally regretted that the US, which had enunciated the principle of freedom for small peoples, had acted contrary to such principles in regard to Palestine. Public opinion, therefore, held the US responsible for the present inequitable situation. The UN was also held responsible since the resolutions and promises, although inequitable, had not even been carried out.

3. The Foreign Minister wished the Secretary to understand that Iraq had no sympathy whatever with the politics or doctrines coming from the North, i.e. Soviet Russia. The whole tradition of Arabs was against such sympathy. He stated, "If you are against communism, we are also against it. We are handicapped, however, because of public opinion." He urged the Secretary to give close attention to the psychological aspects of the Palestine situation in order that public opinion might be won to the side of the West.

4. He also

4. He also stated that as long as various parts of the Arab world, such as North Africa, were dominated by imperialist countries, there was no chance of cooperation between the Arabs and the West. He reviewed the situation in North Africa as the Arabs and Moslems saw it and added the question of North Africa to those which must be solved in the near future.

5. Stating that the difficulties in the world were as links in a chain, the Foreign Minister pointed out that Iraq, as a close neighbor of Iran, was affected by whatever happened in that unhappy country". He regarded the situation in Iran as being very bad. The question of Iran must be added to those of Palestine and North Africa, as one which must be settled in the very near future.

6. In summary, the Foreign Minister said when the legacies from the past were removed, Iraq would be willing to cooperate.

Minister of Defense, Nuri Said:

1. The Minister of Defense stated that since 1934 Iraq had been aware of communism as a dangerous doctrine which had pretended to be working for progress and a better life but the real purpose of which was destruction and terrorism. Iraq had passed legislation with penalties for communist action running up to capital punishment. Certain powers, including Great Britain, had urged that such laws were too rigorous. He was pleased to see, however, that the United States had recognized the danger of communism and was now strengthening its laws against it.

The Minister then reviewed the defense plans of the Iraq Government, much on the lines of that already given to the Embassy and forwarded to the Department (his notes on the requirements were given to Mr. Byroade).

The Minister used a map to illustrate the common defense problem of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Recognition of these problems had been the basis of the Sa'aabad Pact. Talks had been held during coronation week with the Foreign Ministers of Iran and Turkey. The Iranian Foreign Minister had recognized the problem and had promised to discuss the matter with his Government. The Turk had reported that his country was fully aware of the danger. The Defense Minister stressed the danger from Russia and declared that Iraq's sole objective was its defense.

He urged that the Secretary and the United States Government give consideration to the defense program which he had outlined, since Iraq

would be

would be unable, without severely crippling itself, to undertake a program of such magnitude. The ordinary revenues would be severely dipped into as it was. To further reduce the oil revenues would seriously and adversely affect the development of Iraq which the Government of Iraq held to be vital to the well-being and progress of the country. Iraq would, of course, do what it could by itself, but he was afraid Iraq's own efforts would be insufficient. He again urged that Iraq be given aid and assistance.

2. Nuri then turned to the two problems which formed psychological obstacles to full cooperation between Iraq and the United States: the questions of Palestine and the status of the refugees. The solution to these questions should be simple. Israel, created by the UN, should obey resolutions as approved and passed by the UN. Of course, if Israel insisted that its right to territory was based on the right of conquest, and he denied such right, nothing could convince the Israelis to give up such land except the force of arms. Iraq counted upon the US to convince the Israelis of the error of their ways since US had played a great part in the creation of Israel and without its support there would be no Israel today. Nuri said from his own talks with General Romulo and others, he was aware how pressure had been exerted by the US during the few days before the 1947 resolution was passed. US had a moral position for the creation of Israel. "No other power," he said- "can solve the Israel-Arab problem except the US."

3. Egypt was another problem for the Arabs. He hoped this would be settled very soon. He had news that morning which made him believe that the Anglo-Egyptian differences would be settled very soon.

4. Ambassador Berry then asked Nuri Said if he would tell the Secretary something about Iraq's plans for the training of students as officers. Nuri replied that an old law concerning the training of students, hitherto not applied, was being modified. It would be applied as soon as it was passed by the Senate. Instead of taking nine months of a student's time after he had finished college, the student would be taken during his college career for 3-month periods of training for three successive summe[illegible] He anticipated 3500 students would be put into camp for train[illegible]ing the coming summer. In 1954 the same plan would be followed. [illegible] wo 3-month periods of training, the students would be given commissions as second lieutenants of the Reserve. During the third summer the students would be separated into their specializations and given practical training. The Ambassador commented that the law seemed a wise one since it not only removed students from the capital during the summer when they might indulge in mischief, but also formed a cadre of responsible officers.

5. In response

5. In response to another question concerning area cooperation, Nuri pointed out that Turkey was strong and ran less risk than Iran, which was weak, of being attacked. The Iran-Iraq frontier south of Turkey was therefore in great danger from international situation. Kurds were being trained in Russia under Mulla Mustafa. For protection of this area, he stated that plans had been worked out with the British. Iraq's job would be to stop the Russians as long as possible at the frontier. Nuri stated the defense of Iraq was the policy of this government. It was Iraq's only policy. The arms expansion program was not for aggression. It was for defense, self-defense, and in the areas from which the danger would come - the northeastern and eastern frontiers.

Foreign Minister, Taufiq al-Suwaidi:

The Foreign Minister then stated that in accordance with present plans, Iraq had the intention to cooperate with other countries on the same basis as with the other Arab countries. Iraq required aid and assistance. Iraq requested such aid. If such assistance were not forthcoming, Iraq would try to do what it could. It had an alliance with Great Britain and, through cooperation with it and the Arab countries, Iraq would be able to do something. This would be insufficient. He declared that any power asking Iraq cooperation and giving aid and assistance would be welcome.

Suwaidi then informed the Secretary that the Arab League Political Committee at Cairo had decided that the military experts of the Arab States should not meet until after two months to formulate their plans for self-defense, in order to permit Egypt and Great Britain to solve outstanding problems. Egypt would thereby be enabled to take its place in the Arab League Collective System.

The Secretary:

The Secretary thanked the group for the statements which he found frank and helpful. The Secretary then made a clear and impressive exposé of the dangers from Soviet policy, particularly in regard to nationalism and the creation of divisions among the free nations, and how the United States proposed to meet such dangers. In conclusion he stated that he believed a new look would be taken at US policy toward the Middle East. The Middle East must not expect any miracles; it must not expect anything soon. Nevertheless, he believed that a fresh start would be made.